



Mr Trung Luu MLC
Committee Chair, Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee
Parliament of Victoria

Sent via email: stateeducationinquiry@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Mr Luu

Inquiry into the state education system in Victoria

In October 2023, we wrote to you about the Commission for Children and Young People's systemic inquiry examining the educational experiences for children and young people living in out-of-home care.

We are pleased to advise that the inquiry report, *Let us learn*, was tabled in Parliament today and is available at <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/inquiries/systemic-inquiries/education-inquiry/>.

Let us learn examines the educational experiences of students in care, and reveals substantial disparities in outcomes for this group when compared to the general student population, and concerningly, further disparities in outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people in care.

Data from the Department of Education revealed that when compared with students in the general population, students in care are:

- absent from school at consistently higher rates compared to their peers
- five times more likely to be suspended and expelled
- seven times more likely to be subject to incidents of restraint or seclusion
- receiving lower NAPLAN results and are much less likely to finish secondary school.

Some of these experiences were worse for Aboriginal students in care and students in care with disability.

Our inquiry identifies a range of systemic issues and barriers that are impacting these children and young people to keep connected and engaged with education. *Let us learn* found that the trauma backgrounds of students in care impacts on this group's learning and engagement with education, but the impact of trauma was often poorly understood by educators.

For Aboriginal children and young people in care, racism continues to occur in schools and these learning environments are not culturally safe, leading to educational disengagement.

Let us learn includes 40 findings and 47 recommendations that urge the Victorian Government to strengthen supports, improve resourcing and address barriers to education for students in care. We strongly encourage the Committee to consider the inquiry's findings and recommendations, and to prioritise the educational needs of children and young people in care.

As highlighted in our previous letter, the Commission's Youth Council contributed substantially to the *Let us learn* inquiry. In the coming weeks, we will provide reflections from a group of Youth Council members about their key areas of concern for the Committee's consideration.

We also stated that we would welcome the opportunity to present the inquiry's findings and recommendations to the Committee in more detail, alongside Youth Council members. If this would assist the Committee, please contact Lachlan Zangari, Team Leader, Analysis on [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely



Liana Buchanan
Principal Commissioner

17/11/2023



Meena Singh
**Commissioner for Aboriginal Children
and Young People**

17/11/2023